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DIEHL, R. G.

1900-1901

In BRUCE MUSE

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To little Ones.

In Broken Aether.

By R.O. Dennis,

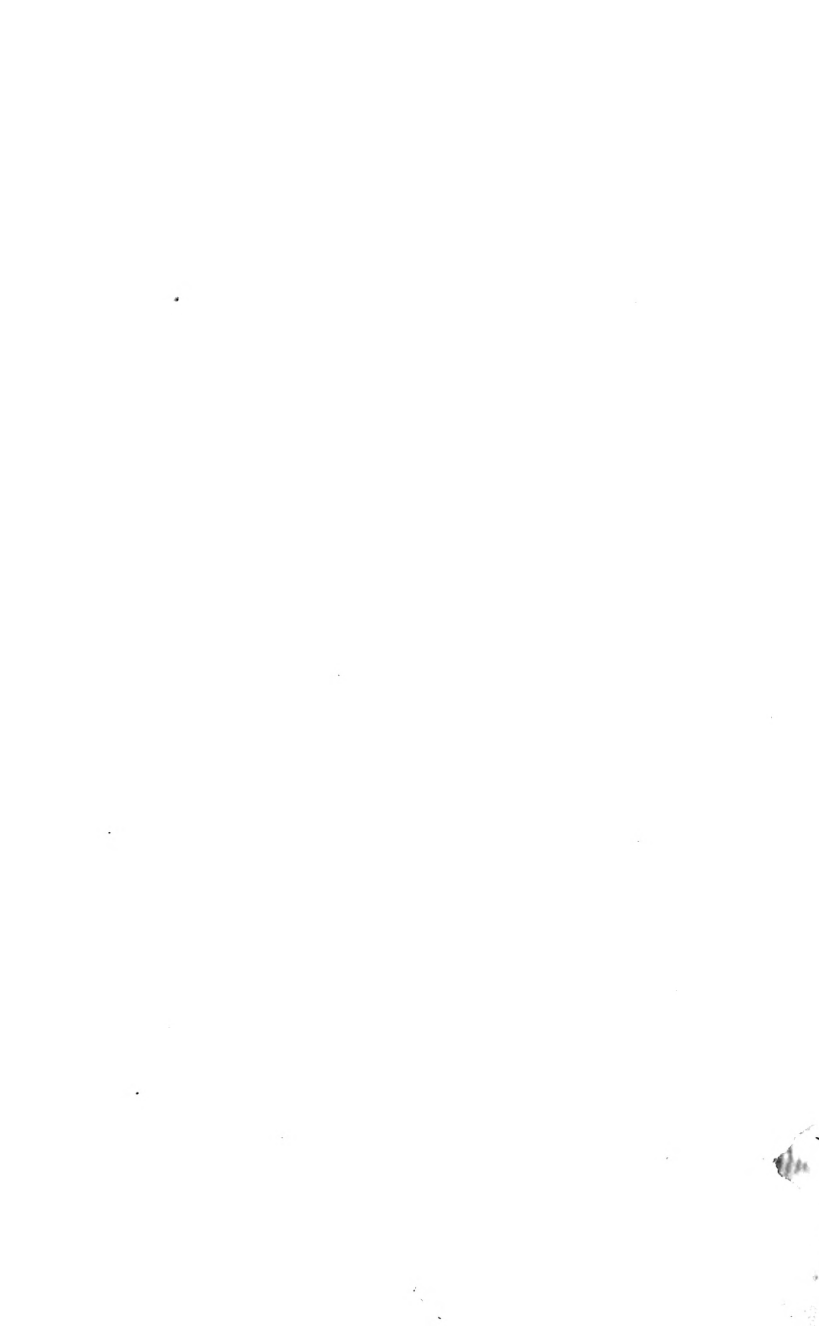
New Orleans, La.



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A VISION OF FAME.

Long nights of watchfulness and anxious care
Beside a sleeper whose unconscious form,
Held only by the slender thread of hope,
Swung tremulous above the drear abyss
Between eternity and time, as hangs
The solitary aspen leaf before
Its fated fall, had made my thoughts to flit
With vague uncertainty, and when the time,
So dreaded, came, at last, to end the watch,
The anguish of embittered sighs and tears
Then kept me still awake and woke me when
I slept. Some respite from myself I sought
By wandering forth into a neighboring wood,
Where oft the lost, loved one and I had gone
To while, with converse sweet, the summer days.
Beneath a massive oak that sentry stood
Amidst a grove of maple and of ash
Whose ripening foliage was in the flush
Of eventide, and whispering secret tales,
Swayed lightly by the wooing, autumn breeze,
A long neglected hammock hung suspent.
Reluctantly, and yet with eagerness,
It seemed, I took our old, accustomed place ;
Reclining, gently swinging to and fro,
I gazed up in the sky where gauzy clouds
Involved my weary mind and soothed to sleep.
A glorious vision mingled with my dreams,
That were not merely dreams, methinks, because
I felt, withal, a half-delightful pang,
As conscious of forgetfulness of things
Still known in that one knows they are forgott'n,
Like twilight lingering at the lapse of day.
I saw a sea of mellow light enclosed
By rainbow shores, and, as each billow rolled,
The colors changed to tints unknown to earth,

But such as Fancy, with a frenzied hand,
 Might use to paint an angel's dream of love.
 Upon the strand of disembodied hues
 The wanton waves did winnow witless words
 Whose empty forms, (bereft of airy thoughts
 Which, gathered into subtle, measured strains,
 Were wafted as sweet incense through the realm),
 Like fleets of spectral, pearly argo shells,
 To be again reladen, came athwart
 The sea of mellow light with rainbow shores.
 I saw still other fairer visions yet :
 A floating garden made of fleecy clouds,
 And each one blossomed into rosy bowers
 While drifting on its undulating way ;
 There waved a century-plant in early bloom,
 And here a fleur-de-lis, while yonder bowed
 A sweet night-blooming-cereus full blown,
 Upon whose visible aroma hung
 In ecstasy, aerial, golden bees
 Which fluttered into birds-of-paradise
 That ever and anon dissolved away.
 And some betook the forms of harps and lyres
 Upon whose chords a purple zephyr played
 Such melodies they danced with boundless joy
 And shook from off their misty, slender stems
 The oder-breathing petals, soft and rare,
 Which, circling round, all melted as they fell
 In showers of radiant sounds whose echoes filled
 The sea of mellow light with rainbow shores.
 I saw another vision fairer still :
 From out the skies a Seraph plucked away
 The waning, crescent moon to be her boat,
 And fixed on either point a glowing star
 Whose trembling light was woven into weird,
 Effulgent streamers bearing this device :—
 SIC ITCR AD ASTRA !—in quaint relief ;
 A halo of enraptured glory shone
 About the Seraph, who, in lavish mien,
 Was clad in filmy folds of lucid beams
 Which clung about her lithesome loveliness
 As clings the calyx to the blooming rose ;

On either hand a smiling cherub stood,
And plied a supple oar with seldom stroke,
To guide the crescent boat which glided through
The sea of mellow light with rainbow shores.
And still a fairer vision yet I saw :
All earth, and that which it contained, drew near
And turned into an amaranthine wreath
Which, at the Seraph's wish, embraced my brow ;
The trammels of humanity were gone ;
We had no need of words because we knew ;
Her inmost, secret thoughts I could divine
And knew that I could nothing secret keep
From her who, pleased, beheld my altered state ;
I stood beside her in the crescent boat ;
There were none else to love, so we were wed,
And what before was beautiful was come
To be but Beauty's sublimated self ;
The cherubim now languished into light ;
We knew the fountain-head of love and life,
Then voyaged to a limp, ethereal isle
Where dwelt of all essential things the cause ;
I went ashore and sought to know this else,
But went alone ; my Seraph cruised about
The sea of mellow light with rainbow shores.
And yet again a fairer vision still :
The Infinite stood forth to me revealed ;
I knew eternity as erst I knew
A day ; the dim beginning and the end,
The worth of life, the price of death, and why ;
The vanished and the yet to be ; the bad
Forgiven and the good rewarded, all
Of which I knew and some of all I was ;
The limpid isle stood in the middle tide ;
I stood within the center of the isle
And looked upon, aye, even far beyond,
The sea of mellow light with rainbow shores !
And then I saw another vision still,
But it was awful to behold, not fair ;
And this is all because there were no more :
Our crescent boat was waning to a thread ;
The star on either point became a blur ;

A VISION OF FAME.

The sea of mellow light was growing faint and dusk ;
 The rainbow shores were fading into mist ;
 My Seraph seemed a shadow of herself ;
 When, all at once, unmitigated night,
 The hush of death, the wail of endless woe,
 The pangs of grief, the scoffings of remorse,
 The blight of blasted hope and wan despair
 Usurped the place of what was there before,
 While I became my wonted self again,
 And cast my anguish into hollow words
 Which seemed like very mockery to me then :

Drifting apart in the tide and stream,
 As branches torn from the tree of life !
 O God, I would that it were but a dream
 That takes from me my Seraph wife,
 Who is fading away, drifting apart,
 Darkening my day and breaking my heart !

Fading away as the moonlight dim,
 Before the dawn of a wintry day !
 Drifting apart is she from him
 Who still shall care for her if he may,
 Who is fading away, drifting apart,
 Darkening my day and breaking my heart !

Darkening my day like a night at noon,
 Fallen from a cloud that drifts unseen !
 No sun, not a star to light, nor moon !
 E'en the light of love that did intervene
 Seems fading away, drifting apart,
 Darkening my day and breaking my heart !

Fading away, but not my love ;
 It grows as the river's gathering flood,
 For one as the light from heaven above,
 So pure that she needs no atoning blood,
 Though fading away, drifting apart,
 Darkening my day and breaking my heart !

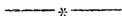
O, bid me come or, love, I die !
 My life without thy love is death !
 But breathe on the clouds that are swimming by,

And I shall feel thy life-giving breath
That fades not away and drifts not apart,
Brightening my day and healing my heart !

Fading away, but not my love !
Drifting apart, for the present alone !
Darkening my day, but not for aye,
Breaking my heart, yet she will atone,
Though fading away, drifting apart,
Darkening my day and breaking my heart.

When I awoke from out that wakeful sleep
The sun was gone behind the western hills,
And I bethought 'twould not be wholly vain
To shackle what was left of all I dreamed
If I could find such words as would not let
The finer, better fragments filter out
Into the void and desert night, and hold
The rougher rubble of the fallen fane.
If that were veriest fiction and a myth
It hath its real counterpart in truth ;
In each long, dreary age there may be one,
As Byron, who awakes to find himself
Made famous by the grandeur of his song,
But, ah, the many who lie down to dream
Of fame more oft to disappointment wake !
Full many who were sanguine at the morn
Behold their noon eclipsed by dark despair,
Because, O, World, of thy too tardy praise !
It may be well ; the stronger will survive ;
And yet it may not be ; some gentle White,
A Corneille, Poe, a Pollock or a Keats,
May wait and rue until the sun is set,
Before their stars of glory are beheld ;
Yet maybe this is best,—to keep them prone
Upon Procrustean racks that they may pour
Their bitter lamentations in sweet songs
To charm the savage ears of brutal men,
As did the dying gladiator's groans
The fiendish rabble of besotted Rome,
And, charming them, perchance in time to time,
Despair not, ye, who merit hath to strive,

For while there is a future there is hope ;
 O, hope, thou tempest-tossed, unerring dove !
 Come, thou, to them from thy celest abode !
 Find where upon their brows to rest thy foot !
 Build thee a nest in some frequented grove,
 Where matin and soft vesper echoes blend,
 That they may hear thy sweet though plaintive note !



NOW AND THEN.

Pray ye harken, sweet minstrels, the heralds of June,
 While the fairies of childhood are chanting a tune !
 Cease to murmur, ye winds, in the treetops above,
 Let me hear once again the first whispers of love !

It was here, where I stand, after many long years,
 On the banks of this brook, where the first grass appears,
 That we loitered our time which so swiftly went by,
 She, my love, little Laura Llwellyn, and I.

O, we lived then to love, and we loved then to live,
 For we never asked aught but that hope would us give ;
 If we longed for a world in the regions of air,
 There was ready a cloud-boat to waft us both there.

We would sit here for hours and make baskets of burrs,
 But forever, somehow, mine would cling fast to her's ;
 She would weave tiny carpets of grass web and woof,
 Which I slyly would ravel, just to hear her reproof.

Unforbidden by her, and unbidden by both,
 A sweet kiss pledged a love, to which neither was loath ;
 Aye, then we were wise in affairs of the heart,
 For it seemed second nature to us, and not art !

In the light of her eyes beamed the thoughts of her soul,
 Like the odors exhaled ere the petals unroll ;
 And the smile on her lip would then picture the word,
 Which I heard ere she spoke, like the song of a bird.

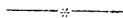
Swims this brook to the river and that to the tide,
 Where the blue, rolling billows in melody glide ;

First in fancy we drifted adown the limp stream,
Then I drifted alone, but ah, not in a dream !

I conceived me unblest, in the longings of youth,
And thus did I wander away from the truth,
Till I sailed down the flood where the ocean-tide swells,
To go searching for pearls there among the bright shells.

From the shore I took ship to the isles in the bay,
Still went seeking for pearls and went seeking away ;
I have wearied of toil and am come home to rest,
For I feel that my life-star is now in the west !

But O, where are my friends ? and the answer is, " where ? "
E'en the ivy-clad arbor is broken and bare !
Little Laura Llewellyn is now—Laura Lee,
And the dreams of our childhood come only to—me !



CUBA.

A PROPHECY.

Stood Morro Castle out against the sea,
Full-garrisoned by soldiers from old Spain,
To menace those who hoped they may be free,—
To stay a petty despot's tottering reign ;
And hither by the Vice roy's stern command,
Was come the leader of a Cuban band ;
Ten thousand patriots thronged the neighboring shore,
And feared their star had set to rise no more ;
Havana, Queen of Antilles's fairest child,
From rosy bowers looked up and sweetly smiled ;
A massive church that lifts its gilded cross
High o'er the crowded, hurrying streets below,
Entombs Iberia's gain, Italia's loss,—
The great, world-finding Genoese, whom owe
Mankind a never fading wreath of fame,
Though he still owes a hemisphere his name !
Grave were the gay become, and gay the grave,
With fear the fair, with cheerful hope the brave ;
The martial strains, the rattling of the drum,
Told all the time to strike at last had come ;

Within a secret chamber of the fort,
 The viceroy now was holding private court ;
 "Stand not too near me !" said the haughty don ;
 His dark and shaggy brow flashed threatening fire ;
 "There comes a day to each who must atone,
 And this is thine ! 'Twere well to check thine ire,
 Arch traitor to the king ! Upon thy knees !
 I'll trample thee to earth !" His mantling rage,
 That seemed beyond the power of heav'n to suage,
 With this, grew on apace, while still at ease
 The Cuban stood unmoved, with graven mien,
 Such as in marble statue oft is seen.
 A moment glared his black and piercing eye ;
 First calm, then fiercer grew his bold reply :

Hast filed the utmost count of thy complaining speech ?
 Then with permission, or without, if need !
 I fain would bring defence of each,
 For otherwise 'tis not decreed
 A cause to try !

Thou, alien, callest me traitor, whom four hundred years
 Have bound to this fair isle, my native land,
 Through honored graves and hopes and fears,
 Because I lift my hand,
 And thee defy ?

Urge not the rights of Spain that sent great Colon forth :
 Long since her rights were forfeited by thee,
 And such ere thou the scepter boreth !
 We strike for liberty,
 And God on high !

To whom thou spakest words of friendship and of peace,
 First fell the thralldom which foretold of death,
 That came a welcome, glad release
 To those whose latest breath
 Was mercy's cry !

Not mercy for themselves ! they would not deign to ask !
 But for the mothers and the babes at home !
 And it became thy dearest task
 To threaten them with Rome !
 Durst thou deny ?

The curse of Cuba is submission to the sword,
By despots swayed and reeking with our gore !
Come war, and be not peace restored
Till strewn on every shore
Her foemen lie!

Vile, trembling coward, accursed ! most sinister when meek !
In whom base passions rouse a hellish fire,
Whose ashes blanch thy withered cheek !
Son of a dishonored sire,
Thy time is nigh !

Thou art the last of our oppressors ! draw thy blade !
And by the graves of those who gave me birth,
I swear to free thy guilty shade,
And sweep thee from the earth
Without a sigh !

Thy shrove-tide is but brief ! Implore the grace of God !
A comely cross will make thy jeweled hilt !
We'll plant upon thy hated sod
A thorn that cannot wilt,
To know thee by !

Despoiler of our homes, our children and our wives !
Down, tyrant ! Freedom triumphs in thy fall !
I would thou hadst a thousand lives,
That I might take them all !
Usurper, die !

He ceased, then rushed upon the startled duke
Whose stricken tongue could speak no fit rebuke;
Two gleaming sabers cleave the willing air !
A look ! a thrust ! a fall ! a muttered prayer !
A blade red-dripping with a tyrant's blood !
The wall ! "Hurrah !" a plunge into the sea !
Ten thousand meet the hero in the flood !
Ten thousand shout : "O, God ! is Cuba free ?"

—*—

ELLEN BORU.

When I dream back the time of my boy-hood again,
And with loved ones go strolling in some crannied glen,

By the springs of cool water to pluck the sweet fern,
I despair when I think : "They can never return !"

Then I thought all were children who thought as I thought,
And, as I, loved whatever the happy hour brought ;
But thou, cruel Time, thou hast taken from me
My innocent ignorance, the source of my glee !

Now I find that our love means far more than it meant
In those brown autumn-days when a-nutting we went !
Now I know, as not then, there is many a rose
For this one, or that one, but none other, blows !

O, I never have seen since those fleet, airy hours,
Such glorious sunsets, such soft-tinted flowers !
And the dear ones that gathered to play on the lawn,
By the finger of Fancy like angels are drawn !

And the brightest, the fairest, most gentle and true,
Was the sunny-haired fairy, sweet Ellen Boru ;
When her dewy love-dreams like the roses would ope,
In the tears of her joy was an iris of hope.

Fond Memory, hallow the first time we met !
All the world wiles and foibles beside it forget !
'Tittle Ellen, 'I said, "I will tiss oo, I will !"
"No Omer, oo wo'nt, tause I'll never stan' still !"

But she did, and a thousand times o'er, it meseems,
I have felt that same kiss through my soul pass in dreams !
If the kingdom of heaven be not like to this,
That eden to me, then, were no place of bliss !

I remember one morning we met at our tryst,
While the birds and the matin bells yet were all whist,
And the faint, taper streamers of soft, trembling light,
Were beginning to bid a farewell to the night.

Every tall spire of grass bent its dew-covered head,
As if nodding approval of all that we said :
"May I, sweetheart, love you always ?" I asked, not to tease ;
"Eh heh, if you wo-wo-wont love Heloise !"

Ah, how little we thought that the willows would wave,
Spectral shadows to-night o'er her cold, sodden grave !
Gracious Heaven, console me, and, Fancy, adieu !
I must pause, now, to weep, my dear Ellen, for you !

SONG OF THE FLIRT.

You say I should love you, and kiss and caress,
 But surely you know that to love by command
 Is as vain and as idle as to curse what you bless,
 Or to sow seeds of Sharon in cold, barren land !
 May the tide tell the moon when to rise or to set ?
 When to measure the last, fleeting tick-tack of time ?
 Should memory tell us the things to forget ?
 And the oak tell the ivy when to bud or to climb ?
 On a dark, sunny day, in a sweet, bitter hour,
 I thought that I loved you, and believe that I did,
 But say, does the bee always cling to the withering flower
 Because of the honey its petals once hid ?
 To love for a moment was heavenly bliss,
 To remember that love is a rapturous thing !
 But to love that same love, or to kiss that same kiss,
 Is like strangling a bird to enforce it to sing !
 As a token of love, so, you send a white rose !
 Ah, yes, I recall, now, I told you one day
 That I loved its soft leaflets so like the pure snows,
 But then should I not love some others more gay ?
 Yes, I love the white roses because they soon fade,
 And must, then, for fresh ones, be thrown to one side !
 But I should not have loved them if they were so made
 That the blight of decay they could always abide !
 Pray, do not feel grieved at the mischief I've done,
 Nor ruffle your brow with the rinkles of care ;
 There are others will love you in pique, or in fun,
 But I warn you of flirts hence forever beware !

—*—

IN BROKEN METER.

A REVERIE.

I.

I was standing by the ocean-side when the tide was in one time,
 Watching the rippling waves and eddies as the came and went in rhyme,
 Leaving mellow rills of music that diffused a holy balm,
 Like the echoes in a grotto when a hermit chants a psalm ;

Quite thoughtlessly I wondered if those waves would come once more,
 To break in requiems or anthems upon that lonely shore ;
 Yet I watched and waited vainly, for they claimed no more their place,
 Though others came whose difference no mariner could trace ;
 In the ever-changing billows still their elements are blent,
 But these that come and go are not the ones that came and went ;
 And have their orisons, In Broken Meter, gone forever ?
 Shall they not come again ? And the foaming breakers answered :
 "Never !"

Their hallowed tones have flown, like shadows of departed bliss,
 Through time's rough ripples down into eternity's abyss.

2.

With measured swell the mighty gulf unceasingly did throb ;
 Sometimes it feigned to laugh with festive mirth, sometimes to sob ;
 Was each strong pulse, and every sigh that seemed so sadly drawn,
 Assorted and ordained when order first began to dawn ?
 Or were they told when Chaos ruled the void, Cimmerian realm ?
 Immensity of Time and Space, what mysteries ye whelm ;
 Effect, all helpless, treads the tracks of Cause, and Cause itself
 Hath not more freedom than the transport toiling in a delf ;
 We are just what we are because we do as do we must ;
 Inevitably our tears are shed till life is dried to dust ;
 We do but what we do because we are just what we are,
 Nor else can do or be, save what our teachings make or mar ;
 E'en these affect us as we are, according to our task,
 In Broken Meter given, and not as we might blindly ask.

3.

It seemed some undertone, some unexpressed and captive note,
 Were strangling in the depths, tied down to words that would not float.
 I thought,—what *did* I think, or feel, and could not give it form ?
 Ah, that our rude tongue could fit our better thoughts whose warm,
 Bright petals perish in its gelid maze ! O, for some art
 Of silent speech that of our thoughts could be a living part !
 What sun and moon are to the elsewhere calm and passive ocean,
 Are pain and pleasure to the mind,—the source of life and motion ;
 That prompts us to avoid, this *other* urges that we grasp,
 And pleasure often gives us pain by the ardor of its clasp.
 Despite the wise, this question e'er, In Broken Meter, steals :
 Is mind and enthroned autocrat that knows and thinks and feels,
 And yet can be, and reign, without and all apart from these ?
 Or do they constitute the mind, as the blowing does the breeze ?

4.

Thou, too, blue Multitude, art one of many, of many, one !
 The complex of to-day was the simple of the ages gone ;
 We know less of the more, but know more of the less, perchance,
 Know more of man and less of gods, than those whose slow advance,
 Made laggard by the weight of creeds, compels the curious now
 To stand amazed. The possible is probable, but how ?
 Not "why ?" nor "when ?" nor "where ?" We wish the knowledge
 of the mode
 That the tired and heavy-laden may throw aside their weary load.
 If one's credulity be more or less than mine should I,
 In honest sooth, be praised or blamed ? If so, not "how ?" but why ?
 Vain man's ideal deity is but himself released
 From finite limitations, with earth's next wisest for a priest,
 Whose care it is to mete to each worn pensioner his vails,
 And chant, In Broken Meter, a panacea for his ails.

5.

I marked that in the deeper waters, the waves rolled high and long,
 While near the shore they foamed and fretted most, but were not strong ;
 Far out uprose a swelling sea, responsive to the powers
 That measure tides and seasons, and tell off rosaries of hours ;
 A gentle breeze will rudely ruffle a lakelet's placid sheen,
 When all unheeded rounds the moon in majesty serene ;
 Such breeze may kiss the slumbering deep, nor wake a passing smile,
 Though fair Diana's gentler influence be not unfelt the while ;
 Yea, the shallows are most easily, thou not so long, disturbed ;
 Like the simple, quickly roused to fury and as furiously curbed ;
 The labor-throes of empires, when giving free-born nations birth,
 Which peal, In Broken Meter, to the ends of all the earth,
 Nor the wail of dying creeds that most begrudgingly give way,
 Divert those little minds so much as do the chances of a play.

6.

At times each burdened wave seemed fraught with dread and bated
 breath,
 That ominously doled : "The greatest secret of life is—death !"
 What need of bale ? A peaceful end the rueful means forgives ;
 Strive, and rest atones : sleep, and the sleeper, dreaming, lives ;
 Hark, andolian choirs entrance : look, and the flowers enchant ;
 Love, and a halo of musical glory encircles the lover's haunt ;
 Are these not enough ? When possessing the earth, why yearn for
 the clouds ?

Is eternity wages of time? Durst I ask what mystery enshrouds?
 The Mocking-bird carols for his own delight, and blithely he sings
 His roundelay where the Ocklawaha winds from the Silver Springs;
 But man attunes a different air, and fearing, trusts his God
 May hear his songs In Broken Meter, and spare the chastening rod;
 Harrowed and harassed by painful misgivings; encouraged by
 thoughts that console,
 Impatient we toil till the last grim date is gone from the checkered
 scroll.

7.

It seemed to me, while standing there, our thoughts but come and go,
 As do the troubled waters in their ceaseless ebb and flow;
 Are they not waves of consciousness upon the sea of life,
 That whirl in dizzy eddies and a never ending strife?
 New thoughts arise from out the wreck of those forever dead,
 While brooding Memory, like a miser, counts the moments fled;
 The silly tyro, in the idle plenitude of words,
 May skim along above the waves, as do the ocean-birds,
 And rudely thrum the mental chords, in the vanity of youth,
 To find In Broken Meter flows the mind's elusive truth;
 Whence comes the psychal symphony and whither does it tend?
 Does it commence at the beginning and finish at the end?
 The reaper fells the harvest, but promises no aftermath,
 Nor leaves enough for gleaners who may seek to trace his path.

8.

And then methought the pleasing pain which quickens every nerve,
 But lengthens out our serving time that we may longer serve,
 Until the slow, yet hastening, sun melts down into the west,
 When each one's fond mirage fades like the islands of the blest;
 A belief, a fancy and a hope; a doubt, reality and despair;
 These are constituents of life, yet, ingredients of death are there.
 In the cycle of our days, the Golden Number falls in June,
 Ere fancy, joy and hope are turned to grief that comes so soon;
 The drops which make that heaving flood may once a rainbow shone,
 Where Pike's eternal Peak, hoar-crested, somber and alone,
 Leans toward the sun and pours his molten crown in streams that
 leap,
 And bound, In Broken Meter, until they reach again the deep;
 In the discord there are harmonies which linger like sweet dream;
 When music wakes the sleeper by discoursing love-lorn themes.

9.

The past hath robbed the future of full many centuries and still
 Time has neither gained nor lost, nor do the rivers fill
 The hollows of the sea,—changeless, yet never twice the same ;
 Not so unlike the troubled air where fleets of cloud inflame
 The middle night with fierce and angry menace, then pass, ere morn,
 Into a sweet, Cathedral still, and vapors to adorn
 The glowing east. Oft lured by vain ambition or the lust of wealth,
 Hath man made thee, thou azure Mirror, a medium of stealth ;
 And oftentimes didst thou his treasures and himself entomb,—
 Too worthy sepulcher of such as merited their doom !
 The storied songs the fabled Naiads sang when Greece was young,
 Still doth thou sing, In Broken Meter, with a softer tongue ;
 Thou friend and thou foe of nations, this moral thy etchings record :
 If Wrong have no bounty to offer, then is Right not deserving reward.

10.

The tide had come, and had gone ; I lingered still upon the strand ;
 It was the glorious blooming-time, and a breeze blew toward the land ;
 How like a throbbing life doth seem the tireless, pulsing main !
 So brave when the orbs of glory rise, so humble when they wane !
 So bright and sparkling in the sunshine, so sullen in the shade !
 And yet there is no picture all of brilliant colors made.
 Is life a transient day between two nights of ebon hue,
 Which reach before and after, unknown to heaven's ethereal blue ?
 Or, is death a night between two days, one troublous, dark and brief,
 The other joyous, fair, eternal ; where love is law and law is lief ?
 Hast thou no answer, Ocean, in all thy amplitude of sounds,
 No emblem of this life, this death, their causes, metes and bounds ?
 E'en though it be In Broken Meter, refuse me not O, Tide !
 For I commune with thee in earnest though thou doth seem to chide.

11.

Came silvery evening as I tarried near the ocean's brink,
 And from uncertain, flitting thoughts a system tried to think ;
 I thought I knew I felt there was some universal plan,
 That fain would teach eternity by time and God by man ;
 But nature's archives yield the least of what we search for most,
 And often do we find a fog where we expected coast ;
 We may, at times, aspire to circumscribe omnific rules,
 Or deem all free to chance,—the phantom argument of fools !
 If liberty were license, freedom still would be in gyves,
 Bound by inexorable decrees while the universe survives ;

Tempt not thyself, O, man! to vex the co-eternal laws;
 Nor seek immutable effects without as changeless cause;
 Like the rhythm of the surf, that, In Broken Meter, swells,
 The rarest of our fancies of some fairy bondage tells.

12.

I turned to go; the murmuring sounds grew faint and sadly weird,
 I felt a strange and sudden tremor, as if my heart were seared;
 "O, thou vast Grave!" I said, "Thou drear and melancholy Sea!
 I would that some great sorrow should make me sad like thee!
 I then might know the solemn meaning of thy mournful dirge;
 Wherefore, at times, in foreign accent speaks each plaintive surge,
 So soft and unfamiliar that its message is but vague,
 Leaving half impressions which make of reverie a plague!
 Flowing and rolling! Tossing and surging! Lashing and raging!
 Onward and upward! Backward and downward! Swelling, assuaging!
 Forever and ever, In Broken Meter, thy monody is told!"
 And I now but repeat the measure like it comes to me as of old.
 Were my reed not rent from its native reef by a ruthless blast,
 Shattered and broken, perhaps this strain should be of a smoother cast.

13.

Slowly away from the lonely beach, reluctant, thoughtful, I wandered,
 And I wondered if our lives are, like the bubbling sea-foam, pondered
 In scales that keep no record of their mystical, mythical weight.
 The value of a life is but its worth to others, whom love or hate
 Hath rendered unfair judges of the trembling culprit's defense
 For the crime of being: praise tallies blame; blame, praise, and we
 go hence
 Not much unlike we came,—to this one, all, to that one, naught;
 Nor these, perchance, were those, for these may now be those who
 thought
 Not as they think: indifference may grow to love, and love to spurn;
 That is the sweet of life, and this its gall; mixed in the urn,
 Then make, at best, a bitter draught, and who refuse to quaff,
 Have heard, with glee, In Broken Meter, the score of Charon's
 staff.
 It may be well thus to cease from seeking blossoms on the moss,
 For if through life there comes no gain, then through death there
 can be no loss.

14.

I wound my devious way where wind and wave had often swept,
 Until I reached a frowning cliff where owls their vigils kept,
 Then paused to gaze upon the lichen-covered ledge of rock,
 Where once some pious prelate dwelt to meditate and mock.
 Confusion, tell, is this the end,—a recollected hope?
 The callow novice, with his marsh-lamp, stalks where sages grope.
 The more we know, the less do we believe;—more to forget!
 The more we do believe, the less we know;—less to regret!
 We know not what we do believe, and may not if we would;
 And we believe not what we know, nor need to if we could.
 Our knowledge is the fruit from the blossom of belief whose bud
 Was a doubt which grew remote on the banks of some lethean flood;
 The minor make the major, as the sands compose the beach;
 And bits of truth, In Broken Meter, are all that we can teach.

15.

As up I climbed the crag its niches seemed again to yield
 The deep-toned diapason that the ocean-organ pealed;
 How mean the mightiest product of thy skill, O, man, and weak,
 Beside the works of nature, seeming more a transient freak!
 Thy seven wonders of as many days, like snows that melt,
 Have gone, nor left a trace, and weeds grow rank where Magi knelt.
 The cant of rituals, the grating, sacrificial screed,
 Are not to wonder-mongers now, as once, so great a need.
 Of all man's cunning handiwork, two arts alone unchange,—
 The arts of Homer and of Euclid; true, though seeming strange!
 The shadow and the substance! the odor and the rose! 'tis meet
 That they should be joint-heirs of time, each century to greet,
 The one with olden songs, In Broken Meter, sung as erst,
 The other with its angles and its trines, still true, as first.

16.

I stood upon the summit where did sea-fowls round me couch,
 Waiting like a lover for an answer the loved one will not vouch;
 The sun was gone and bright-eyed Vesper looked through cloud-
 veils down
 Upon the darkening waters which met her glances with a frown;
 Yet I could see the mingling glances as they quivered in the dark,
 Dancing like a buoy that so bravely guides the barque;
 They seemed like truth that struggles with a deep, dark, cheerless mind

Which shuts the eye of faith and says that all the world is blind.
 O, Truth! thrice blessed when believed, but when denied,—a curse
 That withers with its blight, and makes the weary life perverse!
 Pour forth thy soothing fullness like the gentle dews of eve,
 To cool the burning brow of anxious thought whose very thoughts
 deceive!

We hear, In Broken Meter, the clangor of some unknown choir,
 But only hear the cymbals, and not the dulcimer and lyre.

17.

Adown the farther slope I braced my solitary course,
 To where a dark and tortuous stream came winding from its source;
 Then sat me there to muse beside a mallow-bordered silt,
 • Where shrieking night-hawks sought the nest some lone titwillow
 built;

While leaning there upon a sweet-viola covered turf,
 I heard, when I did not, the sougning, sighing, distant surf;
 Now dreary lowered the clouds in one impenetrable drift,
 Which lightly hung at sun-set with many a ruby-tinted rift;
 So lowers grim falsehood when is gone the vivid, ruddy blush
 The eloquence of sophistry bestowed with fervid brush;
 Were virtue vice and vice were virtue, they would ever lure,
 But the few would be the vicious, and the many be the pure.
 He who, In Broken Meter, sings may flourish for a trice,
 But gold awaits him who contrives some dear, degrading vice.

18.

Again I thought the scenes of life are as those fleeting waves,
 That drift, like crude philosophies, into deep and timely graves,
 And leave their wordy raiment as a token and a pledge,
 Of all vain strifes to graft an immortelle upon the sedge.
 Life may be wrong if lived awrong, but right if lived aright,—
 A dithyrambic strain, or a pleasing melody of light.
 Those who so blessed they love to live that they may live to love,
 Fear nothing from beneath the stars, hope nothing from above;
 But O, when one has gone, the fairest, dearest, best and all,
 Whose every care was but to please, how dreadful is the pall!
 In Broken Meter though it be, how then we love to hear
 The Siren, Hope, so like an angel from a distant sphere,
 In rapt, seraphic strains acclaim, somewhere, somehow, somewhen,
 Our loss shall profit; that we may live and love and meet again!

INTAGLIOS.

THE A, B, C's.

ALAS!

Thou wouldst, no doubt, a secret know? then hark!
 'Tis this, a lover's lorn complaint!
 If sweethearts do their sparking in the dark.
 They'll fall *in* love when *not* acquaint,
 And when they *are*, fall *out*!

BEWARE!

Such small things mar the bliss of wedded life!
 We do not get the ones we thought!
 Just man, the husband proves, nor angel, wife!
 Hence some are married who are *not*,
 And some are *not* who *are*!

CONSIDER!

Be not in haste! But learn in love to grow!
 The tardy oak withstands the storm,
 When quicker growths are strewn about below;
 And gaudy fruits of beauteous form,
 Are oft of bitter taste!

——*——

To M—R—.

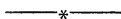
Most things that are bound in the harvest sheaf,
 Are straw and tares and the gleaner's grief;
 Yet how gladly we toil in the noontide sun,
 Rejoicing to think that our hands will have done,
 Only the task found so pleasant and brief,—
 Made light by the cheer of a willing heart,
 In the strife to do but its noblest part,—
 Grateful to the Master for His giving lief.

——*——

TIME.

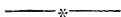
Said Tempo to Mnemonikos one day:
 "Do you remember when old Time began?"
 "What foolish things you ask! go, take my ban!"
 Mnemonikos returned, and would away,
 But Tempo begged that he a while should stay.

Said Tempo : "Ere grass grew or water ran,
 Our father Time was then become a man ;
 My friend, there never was a time, I say,
 When time was not, nor will there ever be !"
 "Hold on, my lad !" Mnemonikos replied, —
 "It strikes me, sir, that you have surely lied !"
 Quoth Tempo, laughing with provoking glee :—
 "Those are the times of which I speak, you see !"
 And, with a wink, away himself he hied.



PROFESSOR AND STUDENT.

"You say, young man, you know that you are *you* !
 'Tis youth, perhaps, that makes you feel so sure ;
 And doth such knowledge one to self inure ?
 No doubt you think that what you say is true ;
 Or have you found some method, wholly new,
 By which identity is made secure ?
 How do you *know* you know that you endure ?
 Have you some formula that holds your view ?"
 "I *think* I feel I know," the student said ;
 "I feel I know I *think*," said he again ;
 "I think I *know* I feel, and, therefore, then,
 I *know* I think I feel," and scratched his head ;
 "I *feel* I think I know I am not dead ;
 I know I *feel* I think I'm what I've been !"



DYNAMICS.

Strong passion first, and reason next, control
 The world of thought and deed, for weal or woe ;
 By innate force *that* greets each friend or foe,
 While *this* essays to win the promised goal
 Through subtle craft, or by a dextrous vole ;
 That leads where fierce desire commands to go ;
 This lies supine full oft though it doth know
 Neglected duty smites the erring soul ;
 That is the parent and the child of wrong,
 And yet there is no life without its thrill,
 No fear, no hope, no love, nor good or ill ;

To this the cares of patient toil belong,
 Its task to guide, mayhap to cheer, the throng,
 For reason is but sober passion still.

—*—

WILL.

All conscious acts are quite along the lines
 Which offer least resistance to their course,
 And these are but the way desire inclines,
 Despite the counter-mand of duty's force;
 That *ignis fatuus*, Will, wry-gotten elf!
 But leads unwary wights into the slough,
 And leaves each there to flounder by himself,
 Just free enough to weep and wail in rue.

—*—

MISFIT LINES.

The past was but the seed-time, the harvest is at hand,
 And many things thought evil now smile upon the land;
 The nave redeems the pulpit, the altar lights the pews,—
 The bloom upon the upas holds honey-bearing dews;
 That which was right but yester may be as wrong to-day,
 And autumn fruit is hanging where blossoms hung in May;
 Through early fogs and vapors breaks forth the rosy light,
 And morrow comes resplendent to dissipate the night;
 Fair hope is to the future as memory to the past,
 One beholds the butterfly, the other sees the cast;
 Some ask: "Is life worth living?" to which I make reply
 By asking in return: Is it worth while to die?
 Is morning worth its glory? Is Saturn worth its rings?
 Are flowers worth their beauty? The eagle worth its wings?
 There are no joys in pleasure but counteract a pain,
 We cannot measure losses by what was never gain;
 There is no good in virtue if evil be not wrong,
 And bacchanalian ditties would be most hallowed song.

—*—

THREE WISHES.

"O, I would be a full-blown rose!"
 A beauteous maiden lightly sang,
 "Beside some babbling brook that flows
 Where mossy festoons drooping hang!"

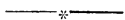
When winter comes the rose will fade,
 And fall in the babbling brook below ;
 Pray make another wish, sweet maid,
 I would not have thee perish so !

“O, I would be a butterfly !”
 The little maiden sang once more,
 “And then I need not ever sigh,
 Nor wish the wish of a day before !”

The golden sheen of the butterfly’s wing,
 Is like to a maiden’s untarnished name ;
 When once despoiled of its glittering,
 ’Tis never, ah, never again the same !

“O, I would be without a care !”
 The lonely maiden sang again,
 “Beyond the sound of ‘Stop ! Beware !’
 For I could do as I wanted then !”

“What is a name ?” does the maiden ask ?
 A tattling tell-tale but of wrong,
 That still survives life’s hurried task,
 While the good is sung in a single song.



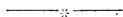
LIFE.

Until fifty we live in the future,
 Thereafter we live in the past ;
 Like an angler, whose line, first before him,
 Soon over his shoulder is cast ;
 Though the hook may be baited for goldfish,
 Less seldom the catch is a trout ;
 And how oft those who grumble at minnows,
 Could not fetch a bigger one out !

It is better to wade in the shallows,
 And scoop little crabs with a pan,
 Than to venture out over deep waters,
 Unless one can fish like a man ;
 But we must not forever be children,
 And dabble about in the shoals ;
 For no sailors have yet crossed the ocean,
 Before they set out from their goals.

There is virtue in battling with breakers,
 And health to both body and brain ;
 Every effort gives strength to continue,
 While idleness brings us no gain ;
 We are never quite still for a moment,
 While either awake or asleep ;
 For we must go on forward or backward,
 Though maybe, at times, we but creep.

Yes, we live in the future till evening,
 And toil up the stream with our might ;
 Then while resting and waiting for sunset,
 We drift down again before night ;
 When at waking we heard the reveille,
 And rose with high hopes and ado,
 Very little we thought, in the hurry,
 Its echoes should be the tat-too !



A FLORIDA SIESTA.

By scenes like this the Land of Flowers
 Entwines her tendrils round the heart,
 And makes one glad to know the hours
 So lightly and unfelt depart.

O, hours too rare to grace a song!
 Go, speed ye on like thistle-down!
 Ye must to brighter beings belong,
 We know naught yet of whose renown!

That butterfly, whose brilliant wings
 Go flitting there like sunny beams;
 This humming-bird, which never sings;
 Are messengers with fairy dreams!

The mocking-bird's unpracticed notes,
 Diffusing joy, and peace and love,
 Seems each to blossom as it floats,
 Like painted snow-flakes from above!

The honey-shod, light-footed bees
 Trip sweetly o'er the petals of the rose,
 Which yield pink music to the breeze
 That ever balmy, gently blows!

A FLORIDA SIESTA.

This sensitive acacia tells
Of rainbow showers tomorrow morn;
The jasmine rings its golden bells,
While rippling smiles run o'er the corn.
That winding brook in each mossy nook,
Is singing songs to the lilies there;
Those anemone leaves, my muse believes,
Were blown from an angel's book of prayer.
The laughing, iridescent phlox,
In radiant chalice, lined with blue,
To nodding, thirsty four-o'clocks,
Brings a draught of sparkling dew.
Those gorgeous poppies on the brink
Distil nepenthe all night long,
That dainty mignonettes may drink
Forgetfulness of every wrong.
Yon cereus beside the tomb,
Mayhap hath pierced some buried hope,
Which lives again in that bright bloom,
So sadly seldom seen to ope!
Those laden trees of luscious fruit
Invite the weary soul to rest;
The tusawilla tunes his lute,
While crimson turns the glowing west.
Now, as the light is faintly fading
From the glorious skies away,
Sun-beams rich with rarest shading,
Linn the epitaph of day.
This must have been the final touch,
From tinted, odorous founts beguiled,
And, though He had created much,
God looked upon *this* work and smiled!
So the conscious earth smiled back in mirth,
And the flowery dimples still remain;
Then the wide, deep sea, with joyous glee,
Did learn to sue with a soft refrain!

EXTRA VAGANZAS.

TO———.

I.

O, for a language of love,
Known only to you and to me,
Whispered down from the angels above,
As soft as the murmuring sea !
And O, for an isle far away,
Far away in the deep, rolling blue,
Where the flowers forever are gay,
Blooming only, yes, only for you !
Where the spring and the flowers are young
Forever and ever that we,
Beneath trellised arbors o'erhung,
In the spring-tide of love may be,
And never less cheerful than they !

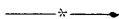
2.

The orange would blossom more sweetly,
And the stars would smile down from their height ;
The hours fly along the more fleetly,
On the wings of our love's glad delight,
And infuse rosy dreams in our slumbers,
An earnest of love that would come
The next day in such musical numbers
The birds of the air would be dumb !
Antares and Algol and Venus,
So ruddy and fitful and bright,
Would beam O, how gently between us
And the dark, mantling shadows of night,
Which Fancy with figments encumbers !

3.

With emeralds, opals and pearls,
The sands of the shore would be strewn :
On the crest of each billow that curls,
Some nymph would establish a throne !
The storms would forever in vain blow
On this island of ours in the sea ;
Every cloud would dissolve in a rainbow
When looked on by you and by me !
Will you hence, my dear life and my soul,

To this island of ours there alone,
 Where the summer-sea melodies roll,
 That its glories may all be your own?
 Then away let us over the main go!



AMARCANA.

When Phoebus blinked last even-tide,
 Ayont the bickering burn I hied,
 That wimplin' aft its course pursues,
 An' maks douce music roun the cot
 Where ane abides the warl kens not,
 Nor taints wi' dowff and thowless roose.

She is the mistress o' my soul,
 O' ilka thot an' dream the goal!
 I canna, darena, tell her name!
 She met me far adoon the glen,
 Then led the wa' an' bade cum ben,—
 Th' war nae ither folk at hame!

Her glad, blue een an' snawy cheek,
 Half hid frae view, as gin to pique,
 Like violets mid gowans grown,
 Or liquid diamants on the lawn
 At earliest blush o' rosy dawn,
 War na designed to *glint* alone!

Her lips were shaped like Cupid's bows,
 An' o' sic color as the rose!
 They'd gar a goddess hide her ain!
 The melting cadence o' her voice
 Wad mak sad Philomel rejoice,
 An' learn to pipe a gladder stain!

Upon her shauthers, braw an' white,
 Like linns o' rarest, gowden light,
 Her flaffan ringlets touzling fell;
 Wi' love she tipped her blate, wee dart,
 An' airted it wi' canny art,
 Gien rapture mair than I can tell!

She tuned me sangs wi' merry quips,
 That cam like hinny frae her lips,
 Then archly cast a sklent at me,
 An' claspt her hans o'er twa pink loves
 Close knittlin' there like plighted doves,
 That wad a god entrance to see !

I mauna tell our transports a',
 'Twad fash the heart I've strown awa',
 An' wha should wyte the lass for this ?
 On lo'e we feasted aft an' lang,
 Still she was loth to let me gang,
 An' lent me mony a fareweel kiss !

She couldna speak for dowie dool ;
 I feart the bonny bairn wad snool,
 Sae eldritch was her woefu' grief !
 I promised her I wad return,
 When Hesper oped his dewy urn,
 An' gied her eerie mood relief !

—*—

ETHEL VANE.

PART I. 1880.

I.

By Carib's tide is laved the gem of isles,
 Forever wreathed in summer's floral smiles.

2.

On that island in the sea,
 Lives a maiden loved by me ;
 Nor all the powers beneath or heaven above,
 Can circumscribe or blight my boundless love ;
 'Twould her distress if it were less,
 Me drive to sacerdotal stole !
 My every heart-beat trills a note
 Whose echoes shall entrancing float
 Perennial through my raptured soul,
 To love of her alone devote !

3.

Others' charms can never fill me,
 Others' glances never thrill me,

Nor could others chill me should they say,
As Ethel said, "I crave a year's delay!"

O, why does she deny to me
The boon so priceless that I ask?
Like a blessing held in heaven,—
Worthless until freely given,
But kept aright if giving task,
Or bring to cheek a tint of even!

PART II. 1885.

I.

This sacred isle is hallowed by a shrine,
Embalmed in dewy, purple columbine!

2.

Years have come and years have gone;
Years may come and years roll on,
And I be far beyond the rolling main,
I never shall forget thee, Ethel Vane!
The sounding sea remembers thee,
And that sad time we parted here,
When thou didst write within a shell,
A word thy tongue could never tell!
It whispers still into mine ear,
Murmuring ever thy farewell!

3.

"Wait another year, I pray!"
Hauntingly it seems to say,
When I will hear the melancholy strain
Bequeathed to it by thee, sweet Ethel Vane!
My very hell is in that knell,
And doth its terror shriek amain!
Welcome still, O, sad sea-shell,
If the magic of thy spell
Were taught thee by my Ethel Vane,
But cease, forever cease, that wail,—“Farewell!”

PART III. 1890.

I.

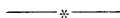
I sought a realm where never man did reign,
But am come back to weep, loved Ethel Vane!

2.

Lone, O, stars, am I to-night,
 Watching through eternal height,
 That if I may behold an angle there,
 Like Ethel Vane, with beauty not more rare !
 The surf rebounds, with solemn sounds,
 Back from the drear and lonely strand,
 Where once I stood with Ethel Vane,
 And gazed upon the watery plain,
 Heart to heart, as hand in hand,
 With never a pang of pleasure's pain.

3.

One sweet thought for me remains ;
 Life hath in her glass few grains,
 And ere yon rounding moon is in the wane,
 I hope to be in heaven with Ethel Vane !
 This thought steals o'er my soul like lore
 Nor spoke by tongue, nor writ by pen ;
 Like music from an unseen fane,
 It whispers : "Come to Ethel Vane !"
 In dreams it echoes : "O, amen !"
 My heart repeats the glad refrain !



MUSIC.

In the realm where Music reigns,
 Golden Days Are Ever Beaming,
 Fraught By Eden's Airy Dreaming !
 Where Eros chants entrancing strains,
 O, let me thence of love to sing,
 That shall my loved one thither bring !
 Softly sweet in gentle measure
 I shall sing to praise our pleasure !
 There rosy life may dare pale death,
 Where never tolls
 The knell to mourn a fleeting breath,
 While Music rolls
 Adown Green valleys ever,
 Fair As Cynthia's Early Glowing,
 Ever Gliding, Bounding, Deeply Flowing,

TURN ABOUT.

Delighting always, tiring never !
 Changing now its varying stream
 Belike a fair maiden's sweet, love-litten-dream !
 Gracious Blessing, Drawn From Aiden !
 Angelic, Come ! Enrapture, Gladden
 Fallen man until it seem
 Earth to him be heaven divine,
 And all shall worship at thy shrine !
 Phœbus, touch my tongue with fire !
 And skill my hand to sweep the lyre !
 Bid Hesper light my love to me,
 As once of yore,
 And we shall hymn a praise to thee,
 Forevermore !

—*—

TURN ABOUT.

I was a youth ; my friend was forty nine ;
 Said I : "What art thou doing with those cards ?
 What are they, with jolly folk that look so fine ?"
 "O, just killing time !" "Well, what say you, pards ?"
 "Eh' h' h, give me two!" "Me three !" "I'll take but one!"
 And so the game of killing time went on.

Long since I've grown to manhood's full estate;
 My friend of forty-nine is seventy-three,
 And when he walks it is with tottering gait;
 He said to-day : "Well, time is killing me ;
 I have at most but few and fleeting years !"
 And I could see his eyes were wet with tears.

—*—

ANALYSIS OF POE'S RAVEN.

Some years ago I was sojourning for the winter at St. Augustine, Florida, and one morning just as twilight was fading into day, I was walking upon the outer walls of old Fort San Marco, that stands like a sentinel on duty, a San Pedro at the gate, opening into a haven of rest. Feeling that I was alone, for the lashing of the waves upon the sea-wall prevented my hearing the approaching footsteps of another early riser, I fervently recited:—"Roll on, thou

dark and deep blue ocean, roll!" when I felt a hand lightly tapping me on the shoulder, and, looking round, I met the quizzical gaze of a neighbor, an Englishman, with whom I was often engaged in railery respecting the relative merits of American and British poets. My friend laughed in a spirit of triumph, as I continued reciting:

"And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea;" etc.

He said: "When you Americans want an apt quotation, I notice you generally go to the British poets after all!" Where are your Byrons, your Shelleys, your Tennysons, that you are not quoting from some of them?"

I told my friend that we have an American poet the equal in merit of any he had mentioned, and that poet was the sweet, silver-toned, Æolian Poe. "He a poet!" exclaimed the critic, "a poet to a T! P-O-E, that near being a poet! A writer of rhymes, ringles and jingles, who always threw the shadows in the wrong direction in his '*Poe try*' as he did in his life!" I asked him what he meant by this, and he said that "Poe was certainly standing in his own light, with his shadow falling before him; he was always going away from the light into darkness. In '*The Raven*,' his *chef d'œuvre*, he perches the bird above the door, and the lamplight, from below, o'er him streaming, threw the shadow upon the floor! Should not the shadow be thrown upward instead of downward?" I suggested that probably the light was without, and streaming through the glass in the transom, it would throw the shadow of the raven upon the floor, especially if the light were from a lamp suspended above the top of the door. My friend would not accept this solution, but he kindly agreed to await the results of any further effort I may make to extricate the poet from his dilemma. After a few days I satisfied him with the following analysis:

It is true, especially of the last years of his life, that Poe stood in his own light, that his pathway was darkened, and even while he was a student at Charlottesville, he was somewhat erratic, but not given up to excessive libations, as some malignant detractors have said. "*The Raven*" is an allegory. The "raven" has always been regarded as an emblem of appetite, as the word "ravenous," derived from "raven" would indicate. When the raven first came tapping at the poet's chamber door, it came faintly and feebly, so that he scarce was sure he heard it, just like the appetite for any vice; when it comes at first, it is faint and feeble, but at each succeeding time it comes more forcibly than before. The poet at first

paid but little heed to the tapping without, when, presently, again there came a tapping, somewhat louder than before. The raven was growing stronger; an appetite for the bacchanalian draught was increasing; the poet's power of resistance was growing weaker. He arose, opened his door and peered out into the darkness, out into the future, that was unilluminated by one scintillating ray of hope, made still darker by the shades of despair. The darkness gave no token; it had no voice of admonition; there was but the whispered word, "Lenore!" He turned back into his chamber of picturesque horrors which he was wont to create, and commenced linking fancy unto fancy and dreaming weird dreams no mortal had ever dared to dream before, when, suddenly, there came a tapping, still louder than before. He arose and threw open his window shutters, when, with many a flirt and flutter, in there stepped a stately raven, ghastly grim and gaunt, from the saintly days of yore. This bird of ill-omen came in with the mien of a lord or a lady, as if thoroughly familiar with all the higher walks of life. This raven, this appetite for strong drink, was not a modern evolution. It was in the bleak December of the poet's life, when each separate, dying ember of a once lustrous genius was casting fantastic ghosts upon the floor, that the raven was admitted to his chamber, and he was nodding and napping over many a volume of forgotten lore, the volumes of moral training, perchance, which had been instilled into his precocious mind. The raven perched upon a bust of Pallas, just above his chamber door; and who was Pallas?—The goddess of reason, of intellect, of genius; the patron goddess of literature. Figuratively, the "raven," the appetite for drink, perched upon the poet's pale and massive brow, that dome of thought, that home of intellect, that haunt of genius, just above his chamber door,—the heaven-lit eye that opened into the palace of the soul!

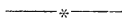
After indulging the raven for a time it beguiled all his sad fancies into smiling and he sat upon a cushioned seat, with his head at ease reclining upon the velvet lining which she should press, ah! nevermore! "She" was the lost Lenore, the departed intellectual greatness whose throne upon the bust of Pallas had been usurped by that raven sent by some fiendish tempter from the dark, Plutonian shores of hell to the enchanted desert-land made holy by the favors of the sacred Nine. But, in his dismal loneliness, he welcomed the raven as a friend and feared that on the morrow it would leave him, as had done his other friends before, but the raven answered: "Nevermore!"

Vainly he had sought to borrow from his books surcease of sorrow, sorrow for the lost Lenore, when he said unto himself: "Quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget the lost Lenore! The gods hath sent thee respite, respite and nepenthe from the harrassing memories of thy lost Lenore!" But the raven answered: "Nevermore!"

Quoth he: "Is there, then, no balm in Gilead, no lotus valley in some distant land, where I may forget that loved, lost goddess, my Lenore!" And the raven answered: "Nevermore!"

"Then, if upon earth I may not find peace in deep forgetfulness, tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aiden, I shall clasp that sainted maiden!" He wished to know if in heaven he should regain that lost Lenore, that great poetical genius which once was his, and the sinister, grim and cruel-hearted raven answered: "Nevermore!"

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" he shrieked, upstarting, "Get thee back to the shores of hell, whence thou art come! Leave my loneliness unbroken, take thy form from off my door, and take thy beak from out my heart!" but the raven answered: "Nevermore!" Like a Caesar, it had come, had seen, and, at last, had conquered, the greatest poetical genius that has graced the firmament of American literature, and while it sat calmly upon the pallid bust of Pallas,—that pale and noble brow, just above his chamber door, the wondrous eye that opened into the chamber of his soul, the lamp-light of conscience, that for a time had almost been quenched, coming from a source above the throne of wisdom and of genius, threw the shadow of the unhallowed raven upon the floor in the Temple of Minerva, and the soul of the new world's greatest, saddest and sweetest singer that lay floating in that dark shadow upon the floor was lifted, ah, nevermore!



POSTSCRIPT.

When kindred spirits come anear they speak :
A short acquaintance oft makes longer friends,
Because there may be somewhat left to seek.
What if reward comes not when labor ends ?
Thrice welcome is the fruit that ripens late,
To those who in contentment learn to wait.

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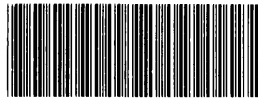


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